



Wildfire Public Health Resource Guide

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Wildfire smoke can increase air pollution levels that are harmful to health, and winds may spread the ash as small particulate matter that is then breathed into the lungs. Exposure to the smoke, ash and polluted air can have a negative impact for all, especially seniors, children, pregnant people, and those with pre-existing health conditions, who are more sensitive to health risks associated with air pollution. Ash is dangerous dust that can be inhaled deep into the lungs and can cause major health problems everywhere it travels. Please visit the [LA County Department of Public Health](https://www.lapublichealth.org) website for more information.

Windblown ash particles may not be detected by air quality instrumentation and not reflected in the Air Quality Index (AQI) map. However, ash is typically visible to the naked eye either in the air or on outdoor surfaces. Although the AQI may be moderate, hazardous small particulate matter may be present in the air. The AQI map is most helpful when combined with observations of the outdoor air and environment.

As such, people are encouraged to protect themselves from negative impacts of wildfires. South Coast AQMD recommends that Angelenos take precautions when the AQI is elevated, smoke is smelled, or ash is visible. Wearing a well-fitting N95 or P100 mask while outside can provide some protection. [CA Air Resources Board \(CARB\)-certified HEPA air purifiers](#) are also recommended for improving indoor air quality. Finally, during large-scale urban fire recovery and cleanups, [please review local health orders](#) regarding leaf blowers, as they stir up ash and particulate dust, and their use may be prevented.

Follow these steps to protect your health:

Step 1: Know the air quality and wildfire status in your area (see links below).

- [AirNow](#)
- [Air Quality information](#) (South Coast AQMD)
- [Interactive Air Quality Map](#) (South Coast AQMD)
- [CAL FIRE](#)
- [Watch Duty Wildfire Map](#)
- [Wildfire information](#) (Los Angeles Fire Department)

Step 2: Check out these [wildfire disaster readiness resources](#) (Listos California).

Step 3: Sign up for the City's [NotifyLA emergency alert system](#) for real-time updates on evacuations and alerts.

Step 4: Sign up for [AQMD air quality alerts](#).

Step 5: If you detect smoke due to a nearby wildfire, limit your exposure as follows:

- Remain indoors with windows and doors closed or seek alternate shelter.
- Run your HVAC system, or use a portable HEPA air purifier if you have one, and use it in the rooms you are occupying.
- If you do not have A/C and/or a portable HEPA air purifier, visit a library or indoor recreation center (public climate resilience centers) for refuge from smoke. **Call 311 (or 213-473-3231)** or visit [LACity.gov/MyLA311](https://lacity.gov/MyLA311) to find nearby resilience centers.
- Avoid using a whole-house fan or a swamp cooler with an outside air intake.
- If you must go outdoors, wear a well-fitted N95 or P100 mask.
- Remain hydrated by drinking more water than usual.

Relevant Resources for Wildfire Public Health

- [Smoke and Ash Safety resources](#) (South Coast AQMD)
- [Wildfire Smoke and Lung Health](#) (American Lung Association)
- [Drinking Water Notice status](#) and [Interactive Map App](#) (LADWP)
- [Current Public Health Orders](#) (LA County Department of Public Health)
- [Respiratory Protection During Fire Cleanup](#) (for volunteers and workers)
- Monitor [LAFD Alerts](#) for current information as it develops.
- Outdoor workers: [Cal/OSHA's Protection from Wildfire Smoke standard](#) requires employers to protect workers from unhealthy air due to wildfire smoke.
- [Guidance for Schools During Wildfire Smoke Events](#) (CalEPA)

Additional Resources, Centers, and Shelters for Wildfire Storms

- [Disaster Shelter Locations](#) (City of Los Angeles)
- [Disaster Shelters](#) (Los Angeles County)
- [Unified LA](#) (City of Los Angeles)
- [Firestorms Resources](#) (Emergency Management Department, City of Los Angeles)
- [Free air purifiers for AB 617-impacted residents](#)
- 211 emergency housing for evacuated residents: **Call 211** or visit 211LA.org/LA-Wildfires for more information.
- LA City public libraries are available for refuge from smoke during regular operating hours. **Call 311 (or 213-473-3231)** or visit [LACity.gov/MyLA311](https://lacity.gov/MyLA311) for locations.
- [Unhoused emergency shelters](#) (LAHSA)
- Report damage (fallen trees, downed wires, potholes, street flooding, etc.): **Call 311 (or 213-473-3231)** or visit [LACity.gov/MyLA311](https://lacity.gov/MyLA311)
- Report power outages or fallen cables and wires: **1-800-DIAL-DWP (or 1-800-342-5397)** or visit [LADWP.com/outages](https://ladwp.com/outages). Do not touch any fallen wires.
- Visit [Emergency.LACity.gov/Updates](https://emergency.lacity.gov/updates) for more information and resources.

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